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fourth instance the decision in favor of the railroad was made (as I infer from the fifth opinion) only by a majority of four to three. In other words, during those ten years, while the various members of the court gave 35 votes in all on the case, *a substantial majority*, at least 22 and perhaps 24 of the 35 votes, were *against the railroad*. And yet that case is used by the journalist as his other proof or illustration that the Supreme Court of Missouri was controlled by the railroad!

Against a campaign based on such methods of misrepresentation, I protest. The people need the facts about justice and the courts. But what they need is facts, not misrepresentations. Reform is needed, somewhere, somehow. But what intelligent citizen can say where or how, if he finds that he is being fed with garbled facts, which are not facts at all, for the purpose put forward?

The worst thing that can happen to the cause of reform is to have such champions. I wish that they would put up their muckrake on their shoulder and go off quietly to some other stable, and leave the cleaning of this one to people who are willing to restrict themselves to the methods of fair controversy and the "square deal." Demagoguery has no place on either side in the honest clash of views between Conservatism and Progress.

JOHN H. WIGMORE.

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One of the questions that must persistently come to the front in the minds of thinking educators and social workers is this: Does all that we accomplish in the way of individual improvement of delinquents and defectives of every other sort stop with the individual who is immediately affected, or does it extend to the stock of future generations, that is, to the race? Because of the meager evidence for the extension of these accomplishments it is generally assumed that the most that can be expected is the improvement of the individual directly affected. Some qualification is called for. As a matter of course a group of people who have been reached by our social agencies make their own environment, which is a grade better than that from which they came. To this environment the next generation is heir and consequently it comes upon the stage with an advantage. In a similar manner further successive advances are accomplished. This leaves the fundamental question of *stock* improvement untouched. It increases our sense of responsibility in the matter of protecting each succeeding generation. Under this conception our devices are superficial rather than fundamental. They are in the nature of treatments of symptoms rather than causes. The problem is approached by the biologist through the doctrine of chance variation and natural selection of the fittest for survival. But the problem here is dis-

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tinct from that of the biologist. Here we are thinking of the effect of variations that are produced, not by chance, but voluntarily through the efforts of the practical psychologist, educator, or social worker. Furthermore, we are interested in biological variations only in as far as they may be the effect of environmental forces.

Recently there has come to light the results of anthropological researches which possibly imply support for the proposition that the stock may be improved directly through the influence of the environment. I refer to the investigations by Boas into the departures from the original physical type which have been observed in the descendants of immigrants in America. All characteristics such as stature, which without doubt are due to nutrition, are not considered. Attention is drawn solely to such supposedly stable characteristics as length and breadth of skull and facial angle. These characteristics differ in American-born children of immigrants from corresponding features in foreign-born children of immigrants and from those of their parents. For instance, in the case of the Sicilian, the length of the skull in proportion to its breadth diminishes, whereas the reverse is true of the Bohemian. These modifications, moreover, are more marked in the case of children born three years than in the case of those born one year after their parents' immigration. The fact that the situation is reversed between the Bohemians and the Sicilians and certain other facts which I do not recount in this place, suggest that the effects can hardly be due to mechanical influences such as the pressure of American as distinct from foreign headwear (if there is a distinction). Indeed, it is safe to say that the effect cannot be traced to mechanical causes of any sort, and Dr. Boas does not yet believe that it is due to improved nutrition or to the reverse. As far as we can go at present is to say that it is due to changed environment. Dr. Boas is not yet ready to say how permanent the modifications referred to may be.

Now we come to the significant matter. If under the influence of the environment changes may be brought about and accumulated through successive advances in the relatively stable features referred to above it is less difficult to think that corresponding changes in the nervous system, which is more open to modification, may accumulate also. Then since mental and neural, especially brain processes, are apparently correlated, we should have to say the same of mental as of physical modifications. We could then answer the question proposed above in the affirmative.

At the present stage of our knowledge the foregoing is certainly no more than hypothetical. Even if it were assumed that the stock of

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the race may be improved through educational and other social advances acting upon the environment, we should still be compelled to recognize the fact that there are opposing agencies. These agencies are almost omnipresent and at the same time frequently so disguised that it is practically impossible to maintain continuously that environmental condition which might otherwise possibly favor the improvement of the stock. Among these unfavorable forces is the changed economic status of the mothers of thousands of the present and past generations which makes them wage-earners and thus subjects them to a strain of life to which they are unfitted and all to their own and their offsprings' detriment. Hence we are face to face with the deterioration of the race and our work must continue to be negative quite as distinctly as it is positive—to keep away harmful while we provide beneficial influences.

ROBERT H. GAULT.

A PROPOSAL FOR OFFICIAL EXPERT WITNESSES.

It has been frequently proposed that there be designated in some way official experts in certain special fields who may be called as witnesses in cases in court involving questions in such special fields. One such proposal is embodied in a proposed statute for the state of New York in an article by Albert S. Osborn in "Fair Play" for January 13, 1912. The reasons advanced for having official experts are mainly that competent experts may be secured, and opportunities for venal and corrupt experts lessened. It is a violent assumption, however, that this object would be accomplished by the appointment of official experts. Such appointments would be sought after by those least qualified for them, and not by the men of the greatest ability and standing in their various fields. It would be too much to expect that the most competent men would be obtained for those positions. It would be difficult to obtain them, and such a provision would be simply opening another door to the endeavors of those who are unscrupulous and lacking in ability. Such a provision is an attempt to add something to the intrinsic worth of the testimony of a witness by giving an official sanction to it. In the case of a man of high reputation and standing and ability, the official position would add little, but it might add much in the case of one of little ability or probity, who might in some way secure such an appointment. The loss would more than overbalance any gain. But such a provision would seem to be particularly objectionable, because it places emphasis on the personality of the witness rather than on the substance of his testimony. The personality of the witness should have nothing to do with the case, except as affecting his